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NAVAL ARMS CONTROL: YES OR NO?

BY

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NAVAL ARMS CONTROL: YES OR NO ?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

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Naval arms control is one of the most highly controversial issues facing the United States government today. The U.S. firmly supports arms control measures in all areas except those related to the high seas. In this area alone, the government, and particularly the United States Navy, has been unwilling to even address the issue. This position is becoming so controversial that even members of the sister services of the United States armed forces find themselves wondering why the Navy continually escapes the arms control hatchet when the other services are not so fortunate.

This study begins by examining several arguments in support of naval arms control, followed by the counter arguments. A conclusion is then reached as to whether this issue is truly in the best interest of the United States. The second half of the study closely examines several different individual naval arms control proposals and concludes with some new ideas on the subject. These ideas not only represent a new proposal, but more importantly, are designed to demonstrate the level of strategic vision that the Navy must begin dedicating to this subject in order to avoid becoming a big loser in the long run.

Arms control initiatives have played an important role in American politics throughout history. As early as 1817, the Rush - Bagot agreement between the United States and Great Britain limited the size of armed forces along the Great Lakes. In more recent times, naval arms control agreements were reached in 1922, when the Washington Conference resulted in the destruction of several battleships and banned their construction for ten years. The London Naval Conference of 1930 limited ship size and number of guns on cruisers, destroyers and submarines. However, arms control did not really come of age until the Cold War era, when global destruction of unprecedented proportions threatened the world for the first time. In 1952, a twelve nation Disarmament Committee was formed and by 1959 it had expanded to include all members of the United Nations. The United States government supports nuclear arms reductions, conventional land force reductions, arms control in outer space and on the sea floors, but has been adverse to even discussing the topic of arms control on the high seas. In fact, the position of the United States government, and in particular the United States Navy on naval arms control has been roughly akin to Nancy Reagan's policy on the use of illegal drugs, namely "Just Say No". The first portion of this discussion will examine some of the basic arguments for and against naval arms control, and reach a conclusion as to whether naval arms control initiatives of any type are worth pursuing. The second half will discuss and evaluate specific approaches to naval arms control and hopefully present some new ideas on this highly controversial issue.

Arms control is a highly popular issue. The very word "disarmament" seems to imply peace. After all, how can the world fight if it does not possess the required tools? Furthermore, complex naval platforms are incredibly expensive. There is a seemingly endless list of very valid national problems, including the growing national debt, the Savings & Loan crisis, the war on drugs, urban neglect, and the rising cost of education just to name a few, which could greatly benefit from the funds saved by canceling shipbuilding programs and reducing the size of the Navy and the scope of its operations. With the apparent significant decrease in threat and the end of the Cold War, these factors alone present a formidable argument in support of naval arms control for the American public. In addition, the Soviets continue to link ground force reductions to naval reductions, and would enjoy nothing more than to portray our stubborn position in this area as the single limiting factor in costing NATO continuing favorable conventional arms treaties in Central Europe.(1) NATO could be easily convinced that the value of Soviet force reductions gained in the next iteration of Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) treaties greatly overshadows the loss of capability commensurate with United States naval force reductions. The Soviets would also like to appeal to the western sense of "fair play". If the West sees a need for Soviet ground force reductions surely world opinion will understand that you can't get something for nothing. To the Soviets, a conventional and strategic balance is unacceptable if the United States

maintains naval superiority. A proportional reduction in Western naval strength appears reasonable. Finally, if economic realities are forcing naval strength reductions upon us, why not gain something in these reductions through formal negotiations rather than accepting random budgetary slashes? These arguments may appear to present a rather convincing case, however in reality they merely scratch the surface of a complex issue.

Let us now examine the counter arguments to those in the preceding paragraph. Do arms control measures by themselves bring peace? The National Rifle Association is quick to assert that "guns don't kill, people do". The same logic could be applied to arms control. Clausewitz stated that war is an extension of politics; a way to achieve political ends. By reducing conventional arsenals do we really reduce the potential for war? The answer is no, we merely reduce the conventional options available. The politicians will still find ways and means to accomplish ends, and if the goal is of sufficient importance, reduction in conventional assets could possibly expedite a nuclear alternative. Furthermore, there must be a relaxation in political tensions to conduct arms control negotiations, therefore our desired end of improving relations may be satisfied before we ever enter into negotiations.(2)

There is no disputing the fact that in terms of dollars, naval power is expensive to acquire and maintain. However, how expensive would it be in the long run for the United States to lose the naval superiority it enjoys? With today's increased



reliance on international trade, freedom of the seas appears more important than ever. As a maritime nation, unimpeded use of the sea is far more critical to the growth and security of the United States than it is to a land based power such as the Soviet Union. For example, just a few of the vital materials imported to the United States by sea include forty six percent of our oil, one hundred percent of Manganese (for steel production), ninety seven percent of Bauxite/Alumina (for aircraft production), and eighty percent of Cobalt (for jet engines).(3) The industrial might of this nation is not what it was during the 1940's. As the United States shifted towards a service oriented economy, we lost our capability to quickly and dramatically increase production. Protecting our ability to exercise freedom of the seas for commercial trade seems more important than ever. Furthermore, while saving money for increased domestic influence sounds good, reducing our Navy will directly affect our nation's ability to defend our citizens and interests abroad, influence worldwide events and deter aggression.

With the end of the Cold War, has the threat diminished or has it merely changed? The Soviet Navy has not fired a shot in anger since the Second World War. Unlike the U.S. Navy, it has not been used as a worldwide peacekeeping tool, and it maintains a decidedly defensive orientation, designed not for power projection but rather for sea denial. In sharp contrast, United States naval forces have global maritime responsibilities with concerns greatly exceeding the Soviet Union and Europe.

Flexibility, mobility, and sustainability have quite often marked the U.S. Navy as the response of choice, particularly to Third World crises. Foreign bases or complicated overflight agreements are not required for rapid naval power projection ashore. Of two hundred forty one world wide crises requiring U.S. military intervention since 1945, naval forces responded to two hundred and three. Curiously enough, only eighteen, or eight percent of these crises involved confrontation with the Soviet Union. No sooner had the world declared the Cold War era over, than Iraq invaded Kuwait. Saddam Hussein has graphically illustrated that there is no shortage of villains in the world waiting to fill the threat gap created by the Soviet Union. Despite having the largest number of ships in the past fifteen years, the United States Navy has obvious shortages in troop transport capabilities. So where do the cuts begin? Carrier Battle Groups are the very ships which have responded so quickly to the previously mentioned crises, attack submarines defend against Soviet Ballistic Missile submarines, replenishment ships provide the vital sustainability, and the surface fleet defends the carriers and other high value units against the sophisticated air and subsurface threats which have become so prolific. More than one hundred different countries today possess cruise missiles. By the year 2000, fifteen different nations will be producing their own ballistic missiles. Forty one countries now have naval mining capability, fourteen countries possess chemical weapons and at least eleven more are suspected of developing them. Forty

countries are now arms producers and forty one countries now possess diesel attack submarines. In the Third World alone, there are nearly 250 diesel submarines.(4) The point to all of this is that the Soviet Union represents merely one of many threats to the interests of the United States. Naval arms control agreements with the Soviet Union ignore the fact that since World War II, ninety percent of the perceived threats requiring naval response have not involved direct confrontation with the U.S.S.R. Therefore, "why tie ourselves to a diminishing Soviet threat in the very arena in which we are most likely to require future growth? The flexibility to accommodate future threats is not something we should bargain away".(5) There is one other factor regarding the threat which must not be forgotten. No matter how friendly the Soviet Union appears, it maintains the capability to destroy the United States. As the world has so recently witnessed, major policy shifts and political ideology reversals can occur almost overnight. Until the Soviet Union unilaterally disarms, it still represents an enormous potential threat. In view of these considerations, it appears safe to say that the threat to the security of the United States and her interests has not diminished, but merely changed and grown increasingly less predictable.

Should reductions in ground forces be considered equally important as reductions in naval forces? Is a favorable Central European arms agreement worth significant reductions in naval capability to NATO? As a maritime nation, the United States must

maintain the capability to freely operate on the high seas in order to reinforce and sustain allied forces around the world. In contrast, the Soviet Union is a dominant land power with internal lines of communication and not highly dependant on the sea. The sea lanes so staunchly defended by the United States represent the very lifeline of NATO. Former United States Secretary of Defence, Frank Carlucci stated in Moscow in 1988 that "Asking the United States to cut back its naval capabilities would be similar to asking the USSR to tear up its road system and railways: given our geopolitical circumstances, neither of us could afford to cut these vital lifelines."(6) There are two other important considerations which must be discussed concerning the trade of naval forces versus land forces. First, there is a significant difference between a massive army, prepositioned, trained and ready for invasion, and naval forces scattered around the world, in most cases far from the Soviet Union. The security concerns of the Soviet Union would seem much more legitimate if the United States maintained multiple carrier battle groups continuously within close striking range of the USSR, as opposed to single battle groups deployed globally. Finally, and most importantly, land forces can be regenerated much more quickly than naval forces. The lead time for building naval forces is far longer, as much as seven or eight years to build some ships, and industry may take years to retool if the demand for ship types changes. This could leave NATO at a substantial disadvantage in the event of treaty violations.

Is it fair for the West to continue to pursue conventional force arms reductions in Europe while refusing to address naval arms control? The real flaw in the "fairness" argument is that it compares apples and oranges. As Conventional Forces in Europe agreements continue to reduce the size of military forces forward deployed on both sides, the real issue will become the capability to mobilize or surge. This will require a secure rear area, which clearly works to the advantage of the Soviet Union. For the West, the rear area is four thousand miles of relatively unprotected sea lanes connecting the United States and Europe and even greater distances to the Orient.(7) If one closely examines the "fairness" of nearly all Soviet naval arms control initiatives, they will seem suspect and always attempt to negate or offset Western technological advantages or eliminate unfavorable imbalances in naval forces.(8)

The final point to be discussed is one of economic affordability. It is easy to focus on the fiscal problems facing this country and forget which side won the Cold War. The fact of the matter is that the other side is broke. During the past thirty years the Soviets have offered naval arms reduction or sea restriction agreements more than twenty five times. Fifteen of these attempts have occurred in the past three years alone.(9) The reason for this is obvious, and it does not lie in the spirit of Glasnost. The days of the unlimited military buildup in the Soviet Union are over. Money previously dedicated to the armed forces must now be allocated to the civilian sector for economic,

social and industrial reform. To complicate matters, the Soviets are rapidly facing a large problem of block obsolescence, across the board from tanks to ships. Trading obsolete ships, submarines and tanks for U.S. naval strength is an attractive alternative when continued military buildup is an unaffordable option. Why should the United States enter into agreements which vacate our position of naval superiority merely because the Soviets cannot keep pace even with our rather meager efforts? The Soviets are likely to continue making major arms concessions for economic reasons, even without Western concessions. Just a short time ago, the Soviets were offering to vacate Cam Ranh Bay if the U.S. would give up Subic Bay. Now they appear to be vacating despite no reciprocal move by the United States.(10)

It appears that naval arms control is an issue which is not in the best interest of a maritime nation like the United States. For as long as possible, the United States government should continue to echo the President's unambiguous statement to President Gorbachev in Malta that the United States government is not interested in naval arms control. This does not imply that the U.S. Navy should not study every possible aspect of this issue. Continued appeals to world opinion for peace initiatives, fairness and financial savings will probably win out over the most rational counter arguments in the long run. For this reason, when the time comes the United States government, and particularly the Navy must be ready to seize the initiative and be the first to present well thought out proposals that represent

the best interests of the United States or at a minimum the least damaging compromises. It is far easier to originate a proposal than to evaluate every aspect of the opponents idea. The time to prepare ourselves on every aspect of this critical issue is now. Naval arms control may be just around the corner.

Since naval arms control appears to be an issue that just won't go away, it would seem in the best interest of the Navy to pull this topic off the back burner and begin giving it serious consideration. Decisions made on this issue will greatly influence the Navy of the future, therefore it is imperative not to limit consideration to current operational doctrine. Rather, ideas on this topic should be visionary, and help create a new Navy that will meet our needs for the next thirty years or more. The second half of this discussion is an attempt to stimulate thinking along this very line. Make no mistake about the fact that this author supports the present position of the United States government to the fullest. However, in the event that world opinion and fiscal realities force us into some form of naval arms control, it is critical that we understand the liabilities of the various proposals that have already been presented. Perhaps even more important is that we use strategic vision to look beyond how we operate today and formulate revolutionary ideas designed to maintain or improve our security in the future while being politically viable and economically attractive.

For the sake of simplicity, naval arms control proposals can

be brought together under four basic categories: confidence building measures, deployment limitations, qualitative inventory limitations, and quantitative inventory limitations.(11) Although not attempting to address every arms control proposal presented to date, let us now address a few examples under each of these categories.

Simply stated, confidence building measures (CBM) are designed to raise the level of mutual trust. Although CBM's do not reduce the destructive capacity of either side, in theory they increase assurance that existing military inventories will not be used to initiate hostilities between participants. Several types of simple CBM's are already ongoing. The Incidents at Sea agreement of 1972 has dramatically decreased the quantity and frequency of superpower confrontations at sea. Other simple but effective CBM's include reciprocal port visits with ship tours, continuing meetings between top naval leaders, information exchanges on true capabilities of naval platforms (this is information already readily available in the western press), advance notification of amphibious invasion exercises, etc. The higher the level of communication between the U.S. and the Soviets, the lower the level of suspicion and distrust. Observation of naval exercises and movements is another commonly practiced CBM. It should be pointed out that no nation may validly prohibit observation of its activities on any part of the high seas however, a special agreement, the Stockholm Document was needed to provide comparative openness for land



activities.(12) Advance notification of large scale exercises is certainly a CBM area worth pursuing. Some would argue that this would unnecessarily restrict freedom of movement on the seas, but this is simply not true. Notification in no way implies asking permission, it merely advises the other fellow that when he sees the largest armada assembled since World War II exercising within striking range, although it may be making a significant statement it does not intend to commence hostilities. General informational exchanges such as these would seem most beneficial. Unfortunately, several ideas proposed under the guise of Confidence Building Measures are actually little more than blatant attempts to limit U.S. naval flexibility. Restrictive notification requirements based on exact numbers of ships, tonnages, numbers of aircraft, or movements of naval and marine forces are undesirable spider webs. Other Soviet CBM proposals have included setting a cap on the maximum number of naval vessels participating in large exercises, limiting the duration of exercises, or limiting the number of notifiable exercises per year. These are all measures that will greatly hinder the capability and flexibility of U.S. naval forces with very little effect on the Soviet Navy, and should be avoided if the U.S.Navy is to maintain its capability to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea in time of war per Title 10 of the U.S.Code.

Let us now move to the category of deployment limitations. Several types of deployment limitations have been proposed by the

Soviets including nuclear free zones, zones of peace, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) free zones, safe havens for ballistic missile submarines, geographic restrictions on operations, and exclusion zones for naval activities including international straits. On the surface, several of these ideas sound alluring, particularly when viewed in an economic sense. Former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James Watkins stated in 1985 that "Although technically we are at peace, our operating tempo is about twenty percent higher than during the Vietnam War." (13) Former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman later told Congress that the U.S. Navy "is spending more time at sea than it ever had even averaged in the Second World War." (14) Given the skyrocketing costs of this massive deployment schedule throughout the 1980's, the question could be raised as to whether the American taxpayers' dollars could have been better used elsewhere. The next logical step in a time of fiscal constraint would be to cut back deployments, and a "cheap" method of maintaining security would seem to be these various zones of peace. Unfortunately, this is simply not true. Perhaps former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Carlisle Trost in his 1988 speech to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs put it best when he said "Mister Gorbachev wants to restrict the mobility, flexibility, and capability of western military power where those prove to be particularly troublesome to him. That means imposing, or getting us to accept, limitations on U.S. maritime power. From the perspective of a land power, self-contained and self-sufficient,

the Soviets find little that they need from the oceans but much that they fear." These various zones of peace are in reality, "merely well timed overtures, whose only purpose is to reduce Soviet strategic disadvantages. Again, the common thread is Soviet self-interest. Wherever you see a zone of peace being proposed, you can be sure that the Soviets see an area of potential threat." (15) Despite arguments such as this, so-called zones of peace can sound particularly inviting. At the Second Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD II), Iceland was persuaded to suggest the creation of an ASW Free Zone in its surrounding waters. An ASW Free Zone at the Greenland - Iceland - United Kingdom gap would give Soviet submarines free access to the Atlantic Ocean, greatly enhancing their capability to cripple NATO sealanes. (16) The United States does not stand alone in opposition to such proposals. Norway has persistently rejected Soviet proposals which would limit naval access to northern waters on a symmetrical basis. Since the Soviet Union and its most powerful naval fleet is located in this area, whereas the U.S. Second Fleet must transit from Norfolk, Virginia, it is easy to see that the strategic consequences of such an arrangement would asymmetrically favor the Soviet Union. (17) The Soviet Union continues to propose naval restrictions on straits, channels and other waterways. In the words of Roger W. Barnett, noted expert on maritime strategy and naval arms control, "No doubt, this is a manifestation of their sensitivity to the fact that the ships of each of the four Soviet fleets (the Northern,

the Baltic, the Black Sea and the Pacific) must pass through geographic constrictions before they can reach the open sea. All of these "choke points," moreover, are obvious objectives for wartime control by the United States or its allies."(18)

Why should we reject the idea of nuclear free zones? The key to these proposals rests not in the idea itself, but rather in the proposed locations. President Gorbachev's decision to unilaterally remove all nuclear weapons from the Baltic Sea and then invite the United States to join in to create a nuclear free zone obviously greatly enhances Soviet security but does little to calm the fears of the American citizen and lessens the security of our allies. The United States supports nuclear free zone proposals which advance the concept of non-proliferation but do not place western security interests in jeopardy. For example, the U.S. has supported such a zone in Latin America and is favorably considering zones for the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Furthermore, the U.S. has signed the Antarctic, Seabed, and Outer Space treaties, prohibiting nuclear weapons from these regions. The United States cannot support nuclear free zones in areas such as the Mediterranean, Central Europe, Baltic, South Pacific, Nordic, Indian Ocean, Southeast Asian, Korean, and South Atlantic regions. Proliferation of nuclear free zones in such regions, unmatched by enormous Soviet disarmament would undermine the policy of deterrence so crucial to western security.(19) One other key factor to consider is the nuclear variant of the Tomahawk cruise missile. The demonstrated

dramatic success of the conventional variant of this weapon in the Iraq war has multiplied the problems faced by the Soviet Navy in confronting the sea based nuclear threat by a hundred fold. The Soviets would love nothing better than to eliminate this huge western advantage by treaty, pushing Tomahawks out of range by way of nuclear free zones.

Other proposed deployment restrictions include anti-submarine warfare free zones and safe bastions for ballistic missile submarines. These ideas are clearly targeted at the technological superiority of United States submarines. Currently, quiet U.S. SSBN's operate throughout the world's oceans with very little to fear in the way of Soviet ASW capability. Conversely, Soviet "boomers", wary of the U.S. attack submarine threat, operate in enclosed bastions near the Soviet homeland. Therefore, limiting deployment of SSBN's, would accomplish nothing for the United States, but would provide the Soviets with greatly increased security and the opportunity to free the large number of SSN's currently required to protect these SSBN bastions, allowing them to attack NATO sea lines of communication. Furthermore, these restrictions would be among the most difficult to verify of all forms of arms control.(20)

We must not forget that freedom to exercise and train naval forces globally on the high seas is a right of every nation, including the Soviet Union. When considering deployment restrictions or cutbacks in the way of international treaties or agreements, economics must not be a consideration. Proposals

limiting freedom of the seas have never been in the best interest of the United States and therefore should be carefully evaluated based on whether they improve U.S. and allied security, enhance stability and reduce the risk of war.(21)

Let us now very briefly examine the concept of qualitative inventory limitations. These proposals are efforts at limiting the wartime effectiveness of naval vessels. Simply put, a ship with less firepower presents less of a threat. Numerous articles have been written concerning efforts to remove all nuclear weapons from the sea and to eliminate submarine launched cruise missiles. In 1988, former Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze suggested that elimination of all nuclear weapons from the sea other than SSBN's, would remove the only potential Soviet capability to cripple or sink the U.S. Navy. The Washington Post in January 1990 quoted Admiral Crowe as saying that the United States should consider negotiating an agreement with the Soviet Union eliminating tactical nuclear weapons from both navies, particularly to increase the survivability of U.S. carriers. "The only thing in the world that can sink an aircraft carrier is a nuclear weapon," said Crowe. Given the substantial conventional advantage enjoyed by the United States Navy, this seems like an area worth further and more detailed exploration, however there are just too many significant drawbacks. First, elimination of nuclear weapons from the sea combined with the already completed removal of Pershing II missiles from Europe would virtually eliminate the tactical nuclear threat to Soviet

ground forces. Second, verification would be extremely difficult. How does one determine whether the Tomahawk missiles aboard a nuclear powered cruiser are nuclear or conventional? The conventional Tomahawk has proven itself to be an invaluable weapon for use against high value, heavily defended targets and is a weapon system which the United States Navy must not give up, at any cost. Third, since Tomahawk proliferation throughout U.S. Navy ships and submarines has made Soviet anti-nuclear platform targeting virtually impossible, some would say it has singlehandedly gone a long way towards eliminating the arms race at sea. Giving up nuclear Tomahawks would enormously simplify the targeting problem, making the arms race at sea attractive once again. Elimination of Tomahawk or Harpoon cruise missiles would eliminate the single biggest technological breakthrough in naval warfare in recent years. Submarine Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) treaties would greatly improve Soviet security, but would reduce the effectiveness of the U.S. Navy not only against the Soviets, but also against the countless numbers of third world opponents such as Iraq, which the U.S. must be ready to counter at any time.

To this point, we have rather vehemently argued against harsh confidence building measures, deployment restrictions limiting freedom of the seas, and qualitative inventory limitations. This leaves but one area left to explore, that of quantitative inventory restrictions, and this is the area most ripe with possibilities. Let us begin with submarines, and then

explore some new ideas on surface force reductions. Admiral J.R. Hill, in his book entitled "Arms Control at Sea", states: "If there is one word that summarizes the obstacle to confidence-building measures at sea, it is, quite simply, submarines." (22) The Soviet Union and United States combined account for fifty percent of the world's attack submarines and ninety percent of the nuclear powered attack submarines. Despite the huge numbers, attack submarines have seen action in combat only twice since World War II, that being when a British submarine sank the Argentine ship "General Belgrano" during the Falklands conflict with a loss of 368 lives, and when American submarines fired Tomahawk cruise missiles into Iraq in 1991. Other than these small incidents, it is difficult to find any post-war crisis where attack submarines seriously contributed. The numbers and capabilities of attack submarines seem far too large for the utility received, or for any future conflicts other than a U.S.-Soviet war. (23) Large reductions in the attack submarine force would not only be economically attractive, but would appear to be a good direction to begin naval arms control negotiations. Numerous articles have been written recommending reductions in attack submarine inventories to seventy, fifty, and even as low as twenty five submarines per side. Given that such dramatic reductions would appear to surrender control of the world's oceans to the United States, why would the Soviet Union be interested in such a proposal? Edward Rhodes, in his article entitled "Naval Arms Control For The Bush Era" lists several



reasons. The primary mission of technologically advanced U.S. attack submarines is the destruction of enemy ballistic missile submarines. Therefore, comparatively vulnerable Soviet SSBN's would appear much more survivable with such a sharp numerical reduction of U.S. attack submarines. Secondly, a treaty of this type would greatly reduce the submarine launched cruise missile threat to the Soviet homeland. Surface ship launch platforms could be countered by massive air strikes, but at present subsurface launching platforms are essentially invulnerable. Third, drastic reductions in U.S. attack submarines would cause a reform in U.S. Maritime Strategy since a small submarine force would not be able to bottle up the Soviet Navy in their home waters. Fourth, the Soviet submarine force is facing widespread obsolescence, and is increasingly expensive to maintain. Finally, the Soviets are losing the ASW race to the west. Presently 220 of 264 major Soviet surface combatants appear to have a primary mission of anti submarine warfare. This could be greatly decreased with sharp reductions in submarine forces.(24) This reasoning is certainly not complete, and the Soviets may require a numerical advantage in the final, agreed upon, number of attack submarines in order to offset U.S. surface ship superiority, but nevertheless, this area appears ripe for exploration.

The final area of consideration concerns quantitative limitations on surface ships. Historically this has not worked particularly well. Setting equal ceilings on classes of ships

does not make sense, because destroyers do not necessarily oppose destroyers and frigates do not always fight other frigates. Furthermore, by definition, the naval inventories of different nations vary because their security needs differ.(25) Previous agreements have been too rigid, spelling out exact types of ships with numerical limits. Too often, rigid guidelines inspire cheating, thus dooming agreements to failure. For example, the Montreux Convention of July 20, 1936 forbids the transit of aircraft carriers to or from the Black Sea.(26) When this became difficult for the Soviets to support, they simply designated all classes of their aircraft carriers as "aircraft carrying cruisers", and then liberally interpreted the definition of "aircraft carrier" as provided in Annex 2B to the Convention. Despite a rather obvious violation of a long standing agreement, the Soviets continue to operate as they see fit in this region. The following discussion will propose an alternative to this method which will make cheating more difficult and less desirable. It will also recommend a complete restructuring of the Navy's active / reserve mix.

Of the U.S.Army, Air Force, and Navy, the Navy maintains the smallest of the reserve contingents and the least likely to be called upon in time of war. The Army and Air Force could not have operated combat forces in the Iraq war without calling up their reserves, but the Navy had no real need to follow suit. This has always been a strong point of the Navy, however fiscal realities may soon dictate a much smaller active force.

Discussions abound throughout the Pentagon and the halls of Congress as to how many carrier battle groups are really required today. Despite the Navy's justifiably strong desire to maintain fourteen carrier battle groups, realistic estimates have been twelve, or even ten in the near future. One of the major problems with retiring aircraft carriers is that once they're gone, they're gone. It takes years to build new ones, and this loss of combat power would be devastating in the event of a reversal of Glasnost and a return to Cold War tensions. One way to protect against future conflicts while saving large sums of money would be to place several of these complete carrier battle groups into a ready reserve force. Simply stated, it costs less to operate a carrier pierside with a skeleton crew than it does to operate at sea. The savings in fuel costs alone for these conventionally powered behemoths (the most likely choices) would be enormous. This idea does not suggest placing these mighty ships in "mothballs" or manning them only with maintenance crews. Rather, the ships would be fully maintained as "reserve ships", and manned by a crew of approximately one third their present size of full time reservists. This crew would be responsible for maintenance as well as staying as operationally ready as possible. The ships would sail two or three times a year, in local operating areas, for two to three weeks at a stretch. During these periods the remaining crew complement would be filled with part time reserve forces. Instead of maintaining two reserve airwings as present, the Navy could designate four or

five reserve airwings (one per carrier). Squadron composition within these airwings would be changed significantly. Squadrons could be manned with approximately fifty percent full time reservists, including pilots. Staffing would be bolstered with part time reservists to one hundred percent when the squadron deploys. In order to increase equipment familiarity and ease civilian job conflicts, part time reservists would remain permanently assigned to the same ship or squadron. This concept would result in a greatly expanded naval reserve force, a significantly reduced active force, and a reduction in capability from present force strength. But, consider the alternative. The total loss of four carrier battle groups by Congressional mandate would be a far greater loss in capability. Obviously, an idea such as this would require a complete restructuring of the Naval Reserve. Although numerous difficulties would have to be worked out, if we truly desire to maintain readiness in a time of dramatic budget reductions, these problems could be overcome. The idea of a larger reserve force is not a new one. John Lehman presented a similar idea as reported by Bernard Trainor in the New York Times on March 28th, 1990 when he said, "The Navy should not cut back on its size but could make substantial savings by reducing overseas commitments and shifting a major part of the fleet to the reserves in light of a reduced Soviet threat. Many ships could be placed in the ready reserve and manned in equal parts by regular and reserve crews." (27) What does this economic discussion have to do with naval arms control? Let's pursue it

just a little further. The United States could approach the Soviets with a proposal to limit the size of active and reserve surface navies. In the words of Admiral James Eberle, "The possibility of both sides reducing the readiness status of a significant part of their naval forces is a subject that needs to be further examined."(28)

Finally, we address a new idea for determining the size of these active and reserve navies within the context of the above discussion. Rather than attempting to restrict numbers of ships by class, suppose we did it by size, in a different way than ever before? For example, suppose we defined three basic categories of ships: "Capital ships" would be surface ships of any type displacing more than 30,000 tons, "Intermediate ships" would range from 8000 - 30,000 tons, and "Small ships" would fall below 8000 tons. These tonnages were picked arbitrarily and could obviously change. Within each of these classes, each nation would be allowed to maintain an agreed upon number of combat ships, support ships, and amphibious ships. There would be no attempt to dictate the type of ships, and these could vary based on the needs and desires of each nation. For example, if each country was allowed twelve active "Capital ships", the U.S. may elect to maintain ten aircraft carriers and two battleships. The Soviets on the other hand, may desire a force of four aircraft carriers and eight heavy cruisers as cruise missile platforms. The decision would be entirely up to the individual government. Submarines would be addressed separately. Since the United

States makes numerical concessions to the Soviets ashore, the needs of a maritime nation like the U.S. would have to be recognized by giving the numerical superiority in surface ships to the American Navy. To somewhat offset this, the Soviets could be allowed a slight numerical edge in attack submarines. These numerical agreements should be reached independently for active and reserve forces. Furthermore, operating restrictions could be imposed on the new, ready reserve force previously discussed. For example, deployments for reserve ships could be limited to two or three per year of a defined maximum duration. Reserve ships could be excluded from major exercises, and be required to train as individual battle groups. "Sailing notice" could be required thirty to sixty days prior to deployment. All of these ideas, which are so intolerable for the active Navy would be quite workable for reserve forces. Several problems will be quickly raised by critics, such as the difficulty of maintaining proficiency for flight deck crews on carriers that don't go to sea. This could be minimized by crosstraining reserve crews on active carriers prior to sailing. The list of potential problems will go on and on, but the solutions are also there if we put our minds to work. Even if these reserve forces were only fifty percent as effective as active units, fifty percent capability of four carrier battle groups is a whole lot more than zero capability and four large stacks of scrap iron.

In the final analysis, naval arms control remains an issue where the United States should continue to "Just Say No".

However, ideas such as the ones just presented typify the type of strategic vision that the Navy should be using to formulate new naval arms control measures for future agreements. Simple confidence building measures such as port calls and information exchanges will probably not fill the bill forever. When the time comes, the United States Navy should be ready to initiate proposals that maintain our security, redefine the Navy to best meet our future needs, and realistically meet the financial constraints of the future.

## ENDNOTES

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